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AUTHOR Robbins, Olivia; Campbell, Eugene
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ABSTRACT

The Colorado Alternative Teacher Program was created to enable individuals with bachelor's degrees to enter approved alternative teacher certification programs developed by school districts, boards of cooperative services, independent schools, and institutions of higher learning. When an approved candidate is selected, the Colorado Department of Education issues a one-year alternative license which enables the individual to be employed as a teacher, under supervision. At the end of the year, which includes completion of 225 hours of professional preparation, the alternative teacher is issued a 3-year Provisional Teacher License. During the 1995-96 school year, 48 teachers selected from 327 applicants were employed in 14 alternative teacher licensing programs. After 3 months of employment, 29 alternative teachers were rated above average and 19 average. Approved programs included 132 school districts, 2 charter schools, 1 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) school, and 12 accreditated non-public schools. In 1995, 65 alternative teachers successfully completed alternative programs. Sixteen minority alternative teachers were employed for the 1995-96 school year; two agencies use letters and brochures to recruit minority teachers. It is estimated that alternative teacher education programs cost slightly more than half the cost of regular state teacher preparation. Five comments dealing with difficulties in program implementation are listed. (MAH)

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Alternative Teacher Program

Report to the General Assembly

1995-96

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Alternative Teacher Program

January 1996

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Alternative Teacher Program

Report to the General Assembly

1995-96

This report on the Alternative Teacher Certification Act is presented in accordance with 22- 60.5- 205, C.R.S. It provides information on the fifth-year operation of alternative teacher programs.

Prepared by

Olivia Robbins, Consultant
Educator Licensing
303/ 866-6628

Eugene Campbell, Assistant Commissioner
Office of Professional Services
303/ 866-6851

Colorado Department of Education
William T. Randall, Commissioner of Education
State of Colorado
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Alternative Teacher Program

January 1996

Colorado's Alternative Teacher Program

Colorado's Alternative Teacher Program was created by HB 90-1150. The bill amended Article 60, Teacher Certification Act of 1975, 22-60-101, C.R.S., to create a program to enable individuals with bachelor's degrees to enter approved alternative teacher certification programs developed by school districts, boards of cooperative services, independent schools, and institutions of higher education. Effective July 1, 1994, the program now operates as prescribed in the Educator Licensing Act of 1991. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) issues a one-year alternative license when an approved candidate is employed. The license enables the individual to be employed as a teacher and participate in the school-based experience under the supervision of a master/mentor teacher, building principal, and representative of an approved institution of higher education.

During the one-year training and supervision program, the alternative teacher completes 225 clock hours of professional preparation. Upon completion of the one-year program, the teacher is issued a three-year Provisional Teacher License. Legislation also calls for the development of a minority alternative teacher recruitment and fellowship program to be funded by bequests, gifts and grants.

The State Board of Education promulgated rules for the implementation of the program and developed application procedures. CDE continues to provide technical assistance, reviews all applications for alternative teachers, and monitors and evaluates approved programs.

Program Development

In August, 1990, CDE rules were drafted for the purpose of implementing the legislation. A work committee was formed with representatives from public schools, independent schools, institutions of higher education, boards of cooperative services, parent and teacher organizations, and the business community. The committee and Department staff met through the fall and worked closely with other states, including New Jersey, in the development of the program. Rules for alternative teacher programs were adopted by the State Board of Education in January, 1991. The State Board continues to be sensitive to legislative intent and wherever possible avoids unnecessary regulation. Colorado's first alternative teacher programs were implemented September 1, 1991.

Program Operation

To offer an approved program, the designated agency, comprised of school districts, independent schools, boards of cooperative educational services and institutions of higher education, submits a proposal to the State Board. Proposals detail instruction and supervision plans for delivery of the program to alternative teachers.

Interested candidates who contact CDE receive alternative teacher program application and information packets. To be eligible to participate in a program, each candidate must:

- Have a bachelor's degree,
- Pass the required PLACE basic skills, liberal arts and sciences, and content area assessments,
- Be able to demonstrate subject matter knowledge through academic preparation, standardized assessment or portfolio,
- Pass a background check as required by statute, and
- Agree to participate in an approved alternative program.

Training Programs

As authorized by statute, the State Board of Education approved fourteen alternative teacher licensing programs for the 1995-96 school year. They are: East Central Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Mesa County Valley School District No. 51, Northern Colorado Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Rio Blanco Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Stanley British Primary School and Denver Academy, Southwest Board of Cooperative Services, Community Involved Charter School, Denver Public Schools, Jefferson County Public Schools, Mountain Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Sci-Tech Academy, Southeast Metropolitan Alternative Teacher Program, and University of Colorado-Colorado Springs. These fourteen organizations serve as umbrella agencies for 132 public school districts, two charter schools, one BOCES school and twelve non-public school alternative programs.

Vocational Training Programs

In July, 1995, the State Board of Education approved Colorado State University as a designated agency to direct the Vocational Alternative Teacher Licensure Program. The program provides an orientation to teaching for individuals who are making the transition from positions in business and industry to either part-time or full-time positions as vocational teachers. Applicants must meet all requirements as set forth in 2260.5-R-3.12 (5) to receive a one-year Alternative Teacher License (Vocational).

At varying intervals throughout the calendar year, candidates enter the alternative teacher training program for vocational subject areas. Implemented in the plan are follow-up meetings with mentors and new teachers and individualized teacher induction plans. The assessments of basic skills, oral English proficiency and secondary-level professional knowledge are required prior to the issuance of the Provisional Teacher License.

Fifteen candidates currently hold one-year Alternative Teacher Licenses for vocational endorsements in welding, construction trades, auto mechanics, construction equipment operation, graphic arts, cosmetology, health occupations, and aircraft maintenance.

School districts which currently employ vocational alternative teacher candidates for licensure are:

Ellicott
Adams-Arapahoe
Cherry Creek
Widefield
Pueblo 60
Jefferson County
Roaring Fork
Academy 20
St. Vrain Valley
Florence

Significant differences exist between the alternative academic and alternative vocational teacher programs. Data which follow exclude the alternative vocational teacher program.

Employed Alternative Teachers 1995-96

The following is a breakout of the 48 alternative teachers employed in approved alternative programs for the 1995-96 school year:

Agency Name	# Employed	Elementary	Secondary	mdl/K-12
East Central BOCES	3	0	3	0
Northern CO BOCES	5	2	3	0
Mesa County Valley	0	0	0	0
Rio Blanco BOCES	0	0	0	0
Stanley British	17	17	0	0
Primary	0	0	0	0
Southwest BOCES	0	0	0	0
Comm. Involved C.S.	6	6	0	0
Denver Public Schools	2	0	2	0
Mountain BOCES	0	0	0	0
Sci-Tech Academy	0	0	0	0
Southeast Metro. ATP	1	0	1	0
Denver Academy	1	0	1	0
University of Colorado-Colorado Springs	13	8	5	0

The teachers were employed in eighteen districts/schools in the areas of Elementary Education, Secondary Science, Secondary Mathematics, Secondary Social Studies, Secondary English, Secondary Business Education, and Linguistically Different-Bi-Lingual Education and English as a Second Language.

In the process of evaluating the program, alternative and mentor teachers expressed the need for meetings for the purpose of sharing ideas and developing mentor and alternative teacher networks. In response to this client request, CDE holds periodic alternative program meetings.

Information Concerning the Operation of Colorado's Alternative Teacher Program pursuant to 22-60.5-209 (1), C.R.S. for the 1995-96 School Year

(a) The number of school districts, boards of cooperative services, and accredited independent schools which have alternative teacher programs.

132 districts, two charter schools, one BOCES school and twelve accredited non-public schools were approved for the school year. No programs were disapproved. Eighteen districts/schools employed alternative teachers.

(b) The number of persons who applied for employment as alternative teachers with school districts, boards of cooperative services, and accredited non-public schools having alternative teacher programs and the number of such applicants actually employed as alternative teachers in such alternative programs.

The designated agencies reported that 327 persons applied for employment as alternative teachers. Although forty-nine applicants were employed as alternative teachers, one resigned within the first three months of employment.

(c) The number of alternative teacher licenses issued by the department.

The department issued 49 alternative teacher licenses.

(d) The number of alternative teachers who successfully completed alternative teacher programs, who were recommended for licensure by a school district, a board of cooperative services, or an accredited independent school, and to whom a Provisional Teacher License was issued by the department.

For 1994-95, sixty-five alternative teachers successfully completed alternative teacher programs, were recommended for licensure by a school district, board of cooperative services, or an accredited non-public school and were issued a provisional teacher license by the department.

(e) The quality of alternative teachers as indicated by performance evaluations conducted pursuant to 18.12 (1) (c) of the rules of the State Board of Education.

The designated agencies reported 29 alternative teachers in the above average range and 19 in the average range and none in the below average range. The evaluations were based on three months of employment.

(f) The rate of attrition of alternative teachers to whom a teacher license has been issued by the department as compared to the rate of attrition of teachers who were not alternative teachers to whom a teacher license has been issued.

The designated agencies reported employing all but fourteen alternative teachers who participated in the program for the 1994-95 school year. These fourteen alternative teachers were not reemployed in the school where they completed their alternative teacher program due to change of residence and a lack of vacancies. The attrition rate was 27.5%.

From designated agencies which have reported, the attrition rate for non-alternative teachers was 37.8% for the 1994-95 school year

(g) The costs incurred by the state of Colorado in the preparation of individuals to be eligible to become alternative teachers and to become qualified for issuance of provisional teacher licenses and the costs incurred by the state of Colorado in the preparation of individuals, other than alternative teachers, to become qualified for issuance of provisional teacher licenses; such costs shall include, but shall not be limited to, the costs incurred in providing curriculum, approved programs of teacher preparation, and approved alternative programs of teacher preparation at accepted institutions of higher education.

Based on the reports from these fourteen designated agencies, operation, training and supervision costs ranged from $2,500 to 4,000 per alternative teacher. The average estimated cost per alternative teacher is $3,410.

According to data from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the state reimbursement to public institutions averages $2,108 per semester for a full-time student. Typically, three semesters of professional education courses and credit field experiences are required for certification through a collegiate teacher education program. It is assumed that the cost to the state for a teacher prepared in a state approved program averages $6,324.

(h) The results of any recruitment of minority persons to become alternative teachers, included, but not limited to, the manner in which such minority recruitment occurred and the number of persons successfully recruited.

Sixteen minority alternative teachers were employed for the 1995-96 school year. Two designated agencies reported that brochures and letters are used for minority recruitment. Other agencies reported no additional recruitment program was necessary to attract qualified minority participants.

(i) The number of minority alternative teachers who were awarded minority alternative teacher fellowships pursuant to section 22-60.5-208 (1), CRS.

The designated agencies nominated ten minority alternative teachers to receive $1500 fellowships for the 1994-95 school year.

Comments

(1) The Department will continue its efforts to encourage additional agencies to develop and implement programs which will afford applicants more opportunities for participation.

(2) Although applicant interest in the alternative teacher program remains high, Colorado school districts do not generally lack certified personnel for existing positions. Accordingly, the need for alternative teachers remains low.

(3) Institutions of higher education find it difficult to respond with assistance to schools for the development, implementation and management of alternative teacher programs. However, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs has an active program for the 1995-96 school year and Colorado State University has developed a state-wide alternative teacher program for vocational educators.

(4) Considerable staff effort continues to be devoted to promoting the program through direct mailings and meetings with superintendents, headmasters, directors of boards of cooperative services, charter school leaders, and college officials.

(5) The Gates Foundation provided a grant to assist in the development and implementation of the program for the first three years. With the cessation of the Gates Foundation support, alternative teacher fees may increase for program participation.